

Appl. No.: 09/870,258
Amdt. dated February 3, 2004
R ply to Office Action of November 25, 2003

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Receipt of the Office Action dated November 25, 2003 is acknowledged. In that action the Examiner: (1) rejected claims 4-11 and 14 as allegedly indefinite; and (2) rejected all the claims as allegedly anticipated by *Lin* (U.S. Patent No. 6,154,798).

With this response, Applicants cancel claims 24-26, and amend claims 1, 4, 6, 12-13, 16-18 and 27-29. Applicants respectfully requests reconsideration.

I. SPECIFICATION AMENDMENTS

With this response, Applicants present a plurality of amendments to the specification. However, each of these amendments is merely to correct grammatical deficiencies, and thus do not present new matter.

II. SECTION 112 REJECTIONS

In response to the Section 112 rejections, Applicants have amended the terminology "the bus bridge" in claim 4 to read "the second bridge logic device." Further, Applicants have made the further revisions recommended by the Examiner.

III. SECTION 102 REJECTIONS

A. Claim 1

Claim 1 recites, "wherein the notebook computer communicates across the communication pathway to determine whether the docking station is compatible with the notebook computer, and wherein the docking station communicates across the communication pathway to determine whether the notebook computer is compatible with the docking station" Applicants amended claim 1 to more clearly indicate that both the notebook computer and the docking station make a determination as to compatibility. Further, Applicants amended claim 1 to make more clear that the determinations are made prior to electrically coupling the notebook to the docking station. These amendments find support throughout the specification, e.g., Figures 1, 3 and 4, and therefore do not present new matter.

Applicants respectfully submit the *Lin* does not teach or fairly suggest the limitations of claim 1. In the *Lin* system, the laptop computer L may communicate

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with an EEPROM 151, but *Lin* fails to teach or fairly suggest that similar information should be read from the laptop computer by the docking station. See *Lin*, Col. 9, lines 31-49. By contrast, claim 1 recites, "wherein the docking station communicates across the communication pathway to determine whether the notebook computer is compatible with the docking station"

Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1, and all claims which depend from claim 1 (claims 2-11), should be allowed.

B. Claim 12

Claim 12 is a method claim that recites, "transferring information about software of the docking station to the notebook computer; transferring information about software of the notebook computer to the docking station ... and if both the notebook computer and the docking station agree to at least partial compatibility, electrically coupling a secondary expansion bus of the notebook computer to a bus bridge in the docking station." Applicants amended claim 12 to more clearly indicate that both the notebook computer and the docking station play a role in the determination as to whether to electrically couple expansion busses of the two devices. These amendments find support throughout the specification, e.g., Figures 3 and 4, and therefore do not present new matter.

Applicants respectfully submit the *Lin* does not teach or fairly suggest the limitations of claim 12. In the *Lin* system, the laptop computer L may communicate with an EEPROM 151, but *Lin* fails to teach or fairly suggest that similar information should be read from the laptop computer by the docking station. See *Lin*, Col. 9, lines 31-49. Moreover, *Lin* fails to teach or fairly suggest that the docking station could or should have a vote in determining whether to couple the secondary expansion bus of the notebook computer to the expansion bus of the docking station. By contrast, claim 12 specifically recites, "transferring information about software of the notebook computer to the docking station; ... and if both the notebook computer and the docking station agree to at least partial compatibility, electrically coupling a secondary expansion bus of the notebook computer to a bus bridge in the docking station."

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Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 12, and all claims which depend from claim 12 (claims 13-23), should be allowed.

C. Claim 13

Claim 13 is directed to a method claim having all the limitations of claim 12, and further reciting, "transferring a read only memory (ROM) date of the docking station across the serial communication pathway to the notebook computer; and transferring a ROM date of the notebook computer across the serial communication pathway to the docking station." Applicants amended claim 13 to more clearly indicate that the information transferred is, at least in part, a ROM date. These amendments find support throughout the specification, e.g., Figures 3 and 4, and therefore do not present new matter.

Applicants respectfully submit that *Lin* fails to teach or render obvious all the limitations of claim 13. While *Lin*'s laptop computer L may read information from an EEPROM 151 in *Lin*'s docking station, *Lin* fails to teach or fairly suggest that the docking station should likewise read information from a ROM of the laptop computer L. See *Lin*, Col. 9, lines 31-49. By contrast, claim 13 specifically recites, "transferring a ROM date of the notebook computer across the serial communication pathway to the docking station."

Claim 13 is allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 12 from which it depends, as well as the additional limitations therein.

Claims 16-18 were amended to reflect the amendments to claim 13.

D. Claim 27

Claim 27 is directed to a docking station and recites, "reading at least one of a read only memory (ROM) date and a product code of the notebook over the docking station's serial bus." Applicants amended claim 27 to more clearly indicate what the communication between the docking station and the notebook entails. These amendments find support throughout the specification, e.g., Figures 3 and 4, and therefore do not present new matter. Applicants further amended claim 27 to correct antecedent basis for the term "secondary expansion bus," and this amendment also does not present new matter.

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Applicants respectfully submit that *Lin* fails to teach or fairly suggest all the limitations of claim 27. While *Lin*'s laptop computer L may read information from an EEPROM 151 in *Lin*'s docking station, *Lin* fails to teach or fairly suggest that the docking station should likewise read information from a ROM of the laptop computer L. See *Lin*, Col. 9, lines 31-49.

Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 2, as well as claim 28 which depends from claim 27, should be allowed.

E. Claim 28

Claim 28 is directed to a docking station having all the limitations of claim 27, and further reciting, "the microcontroller is further configured to communicate a vote to the notebook computer regarding whether to couple the secondary expansion bus of the notebook computer to the expansion bus of the docking station. These amendments find support throughout the original specification, e.g., in paragraph [0038], and therefore do not present new matter.

Applicants respectfully submit that *Lin* fails to teach or fairly suggest the limitations of claim 28. In particular, *Lin* fails to teach or fairly suggest that the docking station could or should have a vote in determining whether to couple the secondary expansion bus of the notebook computer to the expansion bus of the docking station.

Claim 28 is allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 27, as well as for the additional limitations therein.

F. Claim 29

Claim 29 is a method that recites, "receiving a vote from the docking station being one of a vote to couple a secondary expansion bus of the notebook computer to the docking station and a vote not to couple the secondary expansion bus of the notebook computer to the docking station; ... and if the notebook computer is compatible with the docking station and the docking station votes to couple, coupling the secondary expansion bus of the notebook computer to the docking station." Applicants amended claim 29 to more clearly indicate that the docking station has a vote in the determination of whether to couple expansion busses of the notebook computer and the docking station. These

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amendments find support throughout the original specification, e.g., paragraph [0038], and therefore do not present new matter.

Applicants respectfully submit that *Lin* fails to teach or fairly suggest all the limitations of claim 29. In particular, *Lin* fails to teach or fairly suggest that the docking station could or should have a vote in determining whether to couple the secondary expansion bus of the notebook computer to the expansion bus of the docking station.

Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 29, and all claims which depend from claim 29 (claims 30-34), should be allowed.

G. Claim 35

Claim 35 is directed to a method that recites, "sending a message across said communication pathway indicating one of the docking station's approval or disapproval of further electrically coupling the docking station to the notebook computer."

Applicants respectfully submit that *Lin* fails to fairly teach or suggest the limitations of claim 35. In particular, *Lin* fails to teach or fairly suggest that the docking station could or should have a vote in determining whether to couple the secondary expansion bus of the notebook computer to the expansion bus of the docking station.

Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 35, as well as all claims which depend from claim 35 (claims 36 and 37), should be allowed.

IV. CLAIM CANCELLATIONS

With this response, Applicants cancel claims 24-26 without prejudice to later asserting those claims, such as in the continuation application.

V. CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would expedite the resolution of this case, he is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned.

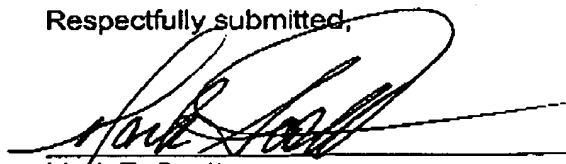
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In the course of the foregoing discussions, Applicants may have at times referred to claim limitations in shorthand fashion, or may have focused on a particular claim element. This discussion should not be interpreted to mean that the other limitations can be ignored or dismissed. The claims must be viewed as a whole, and each limitation of the claims must be considered when determining the patentability of the claims. Moreover, it should be understood that there may be other distinctions between the claims and the prior art which have yet to be raised, but which may be raised in the future.

If any fees or time extensions are inadvertently omitted or if any fees have been overpaid, please appropriately charge or credit those fees to Hewlett-Packard Company Deposit Account Number 08-2025 and enter any time extension(s) necessary to prevent this case from being abandoned.

Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,



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